

State 20
6
January 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED] Liaison Officer,
Liaison Staff, OCA

SUBJECT: Sanitization of CIA Geographic Intelligence
Memoranda

REFERENCE: State Department Employee Suggestion C-188-73

1. We have assessed the referenced Employee Suggestion from the standpoints of a) the feasibility of sanitizing GI's produced in the past; b) the problems we might anticipate in the sanitization of upcoming GI's; and c) the effect of programmatic sanitization on the mission of the producing office. We conclude that the referenced Suggestion is impractical and ill-advised.

2. The GI is a specialized product for a specialized audience. A detailed examination of the GI's published during the last 3 years reveals that the classified content in GI's is never "minimal." In every case, the classification has been kept as low as possible, as is evidenced by GI Q-6, which bears only the control FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. Despite the passage of time, probably only 6 of the 13 GI's produced during this period could be sanitized and issued as unclassified reports today. In the cases of the remaining 7, either the classified content is inseparable from the report or elimination of the classified content would vitiate the report's value. In all sanitization actions, of course, there would be a requirement that the original researcher re-identify the classified elements, secure downgrading action where possible, update the report where necessary and -- since a release to the general public is provided -- review for possible conflict with copyright laws.

3. Programmatic sanitization of future GI's would create similar problems, and more, including the following:

a. Identification of the specific data in a classified primary source that provides the basis for its classification.

b. Securing downgrading action on classified data that cannot be omitted.

c. Checking for copyright law complications.

d. More cautious report preparation because of the sensitive content and use for an entirely different group of end users.

4. The expenditure of time and effort required for the maintenance does not seem warranted. It amounts to luxury use of a very scarce resource. In addition, we do not feel that intelligence analysts have any proper role, except on an ad hoc special case basis, in the public-service program here envisioned. Their function is in support of a mission to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to national security and to provide for the appropriate dissemination of it within the Government. Sometimes, in the process, aid can be given to public-service programs, but it seems clear that this aid cannot be given in the costly form of sensitized G's.

[REDACTED]
Chief, Geographic Research, [REDACTED]

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